

An aerial photograph taken from the perspective of someone inside a helicopter, looking out over a vast, flooded landscape. The water is dark and murky, littered with a large amount of brown debris, likely trees and branches. In the distance, some buildings and structures are visible, partially submerged. The foreground shows the interior of the helicopter, including a black helmet and a green bag with a white label that reads "ALTA". The word "INDONESIA" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# INDONESIA



With about 235,000 dead or missing, Indonesia's Aceh province suffered the greatest loss in the Indian Ocean.

The small yellow helicopter that lifted up from Banda Aceh airport flew over the vast brown swathes of fields, villages, forests and shoreline smashed by the December 26 tsunami. It passed over the road, its bridges tossed aside like toys, cut in many places and washed into the sea in others.

Huge boats lay upside down and acres of farmland lay washed clean of crops, houses, trees and all signs of greenery.

Wherever it passed a village spared by the tsunami, blue tents clustered around the domed mosque and the school yard.

But it was only when it landed and one set out on foot through the muddy debris left by thousands of homes that the enormous destruction took on a human face.

The town of Calang on the west coast of Sumatra was perhaps the first place the tsunami hit—probably just five or 10 minutes after the 6:58 a.m. earthquake.

Yet one month later, Lele Nurlali, 15 and Mohammed Haris, 9—who live in an emergency shelter with their aunt because their parents died in the tsunami—are going to school. Hundreds of others live in the sturdy shelters the survivors built up on the hillside above the threatening sea, with plastic tarps provided by USAID and other foreign donors. They used salvaged boards for the floor and tin sheets for the roof.

**BANDA ACEH DESTROYED:** A U.S. Navy helicopter crewman delivering relief views the utter destruction of Banda Aceh.



**ADOPTING ORPHAN:** This woman in a displaced persons camp has informally added the orphan boy next to her, to her own family.

# RAVAGED

PATRICK M. BONAFIDE / U.S. NAVY

BEN BARBER / USAID



Inside the shelters, children play and read their school books. The floors are clean and clothing—provided by donors—is clean and folded neatly on shelves supported by straight branches.

Inside Lele's house, stacked on a shelf, are bottled water, biscuits, Lux soap, shampoo and bags of rice.

"The first help we got came from the U.S. Navy helicopters," said teacher Yusni (she uses one name) who lives with nine others in one of the shelters. Her husband is dead and her village destroyed.

In large brown tents set up by the Indonesian military, a high school has been started. "We feel sad because we miss our friends—10 kids in my class died," said one of the students.

In Calang and in Banda Aceh, survivors support each other and provide the love and care that helps them cope with their loss.

Many earn \$8 per day shoveling mud and debris from hospitals, schools, roads and public buildings under U.S. programs.

Aceh is a fertile province and away from the damaged coast, golden rice fields were being harvested. Fishermen were hoping to repair their boats and resume their trade.

The Free Aceh Movement, known by Indonesian letters GAM, has fought the Indonesian army since 1976, leaving 13,000 dead. But after the tsunami, fighting stopped and peace talks began in Helsinki.

At Banda Aceh airport, the humanitarian aid operation was going on full bore one month after the tsunami. Four huge cargo

planes parked in a row, disgorging pallets of food, water and medicine; trucks and construction equipment rolled down ramps ready to deliver aid and repair roads.

Out on Banda Aceh's vast, ruined plain, which once housed 200,000 people and their businesses, schools and places of worship, dozens of large excavators dug at the piles of shattered boards, cement and brick rubble, bits of furniture and other trash left by the giant wave.

An endless series of trucks carted the debris away to dump sites.

One truck carried away plastic bags with bodies discovered as the rubble was cleared—up to 1,000 corpses a day were still being found a month after the tsunami.

In the tent camps where 400,000 sur-

**WAVE OF DESTRUCTION:** The ruins of Banda Aceh lie in mute testimony to the power of the tsunami.





vivors were sheltered, hundreds of foreign aid groups provided clean water, food and medical care. USAID funds went to UNICEF, World Vision, the World Health Organization, Mercy Corps, the International Rescue Committee, the moderate Islamic group Muhammadiyah, Project Concern International, CARE and other groups.

U.S. Navy helicopters and planes from the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and the Bonhomme Richard flew 600 sorties delivering 4.8 million pounds of food, water and medicine. They evacuated 3,000 Indonesian tsunami victims to shelters and hospitals.

At Banda Aceh airport each morning, 20 U.S., Indonesian, German, Australian and other military officers met with U.N. officials to coordinate aid. When the Lincoln

ended its mission Feb. 4, the Banda Aceh newspaper ran a front page photo of the ship headlined: "Thank You USS A. Lincoln."

In the corner of the picture was a photo of the U.S. hospital ship Mercy which treated 20,000 tsunami survivors before it left Indonesian waters March 16.

U.S. aid to Indonesia reached \$130 million by April and private American pledges to all tsunami-affected countries topped \$1 billion by mid March according to InterAction, a Washington-based group of more than 160 NGOs.

The Indonesian military and USAID had begun building temporary housing to move people out of tents while Indonesia decided where to build permanent homes that will be safe from future tsunamis.

**"Fifteen minutes after the earthquake I saw the water coming and I ran. The water was 12 meters high... People called for help. I heard the noise of the houses sucked under the water."**

Zainal Abidin, 49, who sold fish in Banda Aceh







**COMING THROUGH:** Indonesian children haul drinking water in Meulaboh, Sumatra, delivered by U.S. helicopters.

REBECCA J. MOAT / U.S. NAVY

ALAN D. MCKEY / U.S. NAVY



**DIPLOMATIC AID:** In Jakarta, U.S. Ambassador Lynn Pascoe (left) and USAID Mission Director Bill Frej load relief for Aceh.



**MEDICAL ATTENTION:** Injured man evacuated by U.S. Navy and USAID-funded medic from Sumatra village.

JORDAN R. BEESLEY / U.S. NAVY





## U.S. Government Aid to Indonesia

### Aid provided by the U.S. military included:

- Aircraft carrier Lincoln plus other U.S. ships used dozens of helicopters and landing craft to deliver aid.
- About 16,000 U.S. sailors and airmen helped deliver aid and evacuate injured.
- U.S. military hospital ship Mercy treated 20,000 people affected by the tsunami.

### Civilian aid worth \$42 million delivered as of April 1, 2005, included:

- 80 heavy trucks hired to deliver aid
- Kitchen sets for 100,000 people
- Mosquito nets for 30,000 people
- Water containers for 210,000 people
- Hygiene kits serving 10,000 people
- Plastic shelters for 690 people
- \$2.5 million for cleanup crews



**MOSQUE WATER:** U.S. Navy corpsman tests water purity at mosque camp for survivors in Banda Aceh.



**BEARING RELIEF:** Pallets of U.S.-supplied food, water, medicine and tenting arrive by plane for distribution.